

Jeopardy Assessment
for the Proposed Incidental Taking Authorization
of the snow trillium (*Trillium nivale*)
Nugget Lake West Grade Stabilization Structure Project
Nugget Lake County Park, Pierce County, Wisconsin

Background

The state-threatened snow trillium is a member of the genus *Trillium*. The common name of the species comes from its early spring flowering time, sometimes while there is snow on the ground. *Trillium nivale* is one of our shortest trilliums, only growing to a height of 3 to 6 inches from a short, stout rhizome. In Wisconsin, snow trilliums typically flower from late March through April. Because of their early flowering period and diminutive size, snow trilliums may be easily overlooked. The three whorled leaves are in the typical trillium arrangement. In Wisconsin, snow trilliums occur in rich, moist, calcareous southern mesic and dry-mesic forests.

Snow trillium has been found in 12 counties in Wisconsin, but is largely confined to three counties: Pierce, Brown, and Manitowoc. Snow trillium has been observed at 34 sites since 1984. Eleven populations are either older, historical records or have been extirpated. Of these sites, only 11 populations are of good to excellent estimated viability, and an additional 2 populations are ranked at fair to good. The remainder of the populations either have fair or poor estimated viability. The population at Nugget Lake County Park is one of the largest in the state.

In summary, snow trillium occurs mostly in southern dry-mesic or mesic forests with the greatest concentrations in Pierce, Brown, and Manitowoc counties. About two-thirds of the documented populations have fair to poor estimated viability. The Nugget Lake County Park site has one of the largest populations in Wisconsin with thousands of plants observed in 2004.

Jeopardy Assessment

The proposed Nugget Lake West Grade Stabilization Structure has very low potential of take due to the degraded habitat conditions of the dry gully and the avoidance of other more suitable habitat areas. Given the size and distribution of snow trillium within the park and the limited disturbance to the plant, the Department has determined that the project is unlikely to jeopardize the statewide population.

Conservation Measures

The following conservation measures will be adhered to for the purpose of minimizing any adverse effect on the state endangered snow trillium.

1. No vegetation disturbance should occur outside of the temporary pool area and the dam construction zone that is considered suitable habitat for snow trillium.
2. Delineate the project construction area with either silt fencing or orange construction fence so that construction activities will be confined to within that area.
3. All fill material must be obtained from areas that do not contain snow trillium habitat.